

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A method for triggering restraint devices (8), in which at least one collision-indicating signal is generated,  
wherein, from the moment that a collision is detected, temporally defined crash phases are specified; for every crash phase, a crash type and a crash severity are determined from the signal; and the appropriate restraint devices (8) are triggered as a function of the crash severity and/or the crash type.
2. The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the crash phases are defined as a function of the vehicle type.
3. The method as recited in Claim 1 or 2, wherein the crash type is determined for every crash phase is determined in that, for different possible crash types, the at least one signal is analyzed, and results of these analyses are combined with one another so as to determine the crash type.
4. The method as recited in Claim 3, wherein, to determine the crash severity, at least one algorithm is selected as a function of the crash type, and results from the at least one algorithm are used to determine the crash severity.
5. The method as recited in one of the preceding claims, wherein, from the at least one signal, a plausibility signal is derived which is used to check the triggering.
6. The method as recited in one of the preceding claims, wherein, for different collision sensors in the vehicle, the crash type and the crash severity are in each case determined separately for the respective crash phase and the crash types and crash severities determined in this manner are in each case combined for the purpose of triggering.
7. The method as recited in Claim 6, wherein, for the purpose of combination, the respective crash types and crash severities determined for the different collision sensors are evaluated as a function of the relevant crash type and/or the relevant crash severity and/or the relevant collision sensor.

8. The method as recited in Claim 7, wherein the evaluation is performed continuously.

9. The method as recited in Claim 7, wherein the evaluation is performed with the aid of specific thresholds.

10. The use of an apparatus for triggering restraint devices (8) in a method as recited in one of Claims 1 through 9.